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Letter dated 29 December 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-ninth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 November to 21 December 2016.

The situation with regard to the destruction of the chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic remains unchanged. Of the 27 facilities, 24 have been verified by OPCW as having been destroyed. However, and as stated in his previous notes to the OPCW Executive Council, the Director-General reconfirms that the poor security situation on the ground still prevents safe access to the remaining hangar and two stationary above-ground facilities by either the Syrian Arab Republic or the OPCW secretariat.

With respect to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent submissions, I take note of the correspondence between OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic with a view to resolving the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies. In this regard, I also note the view of the OPCW Secretariat that the declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic remains incomplete and therefore reiterate the need for the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW secretariat to work together to resolve these issues.

The continuing use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is totally unacceptable. The international community must work together to stop this and to uphold the taboo against the use of chemical weapons. Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons must not be permitted to act with impunity. As the Director-General notes, a team from the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic is actively investigating recent allegations of the use of these weapons, including through the deployment of a team to Damascus from 12 to 18 December 2016.

On 17 November 2016, by its resolution 2319 (2016), the Security Council approved the renewal of the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism for one year. Efforts are now under way to support the continuing work of the Mechanism. I reiterate my full support for the work of the Mechanism.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

Letter dated 22 December 2016 from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 November to 21 December 2016 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director-General

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2 (f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the thirty-ninth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 November to 21 December 2016.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the poor security situation continues to preclude safe access both for the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready to accept the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above-ground facilities.

(b) On 19 December 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its thirty-seventh monthly report (EC-84/P/NAT.4, dated 19 December 2016) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-81/DEC.4

8. In decision EC-81/DEC.4, the Council requested the Secretariat, through the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), to continue its efforts, on an expedited basis, to verify the accuracy and completeness of the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration and related disclosures, and to address the gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies it has identified. The Council also requested the Director-General, in parallel with the efforts of the DAT, to report to the Council, at all future sessions, any unresolved issues regarding the Syrian declaration and related submissions.

9. As reported previously, through a letter dated 13 October 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic declared certain parts of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) under paragraph 1(d) of Article III of the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"). The Secretariat's assessment that this declaration was incomplete, in that it did not reflect the full scope and nature of the activities declarable under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III of the Convention, which had been carried out at the SSRC since 1 January 1946, was shared with the Syrian Arab Republic through a letter dated 1 November 2016.

10. In a letter dated 10 November 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic provided its comments on the Secretariat's assessment regarding the declaration of the SSRC under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III of the Convention. In response to that letter, the Secretariat sent a letter to the Syrian Arab Republic dated 6 December 2016, in which it reiterated its previous assessment that the declaration of the SSRC under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III of the Convention was incomplete, and requested the Syrian Arab Republic to submit a declaration that would reflect fully the nature and scope of the activities declarable under subparagraph 1(d) of Article III of the Convention, which had been carried out at the SSRC since 1 January 1946. The

Secretariat's letter also included a summary of the main indicators of the involvement of the SSRC in the Syrian chemical weapons programme and its declarability under the Convention. The Secretariat also urged the Syrian Arab Republic to take the necessary steps to complete its declaration.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

11. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

12. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

13. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 7.8 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America, and the European Union. Pledges from other donors have been made and are currently being processed.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

14. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continued to study all available information relating to the allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the reporting period, the FFM recorded in open sources 10 allegations of the use of chemicals as weapons, nine of which were in the Aleppo Governorate.

15. As reported previously, the Secretariat received a letter dated 16 November 2016 from the Syrian Arab Republic requesting the Director-General to dispatch OPCW experts to investigate three incidents reported to have occurred on 31 October, 3 November, and 13 November 2016 in the city of Aleppo. With regard to the offer from the Russian Federation to provide samples and other material, as reported previously, the Syrian Arab Republic sent a letter on 29 November 2016 inviting a team of OPCW experts to receive such samples and other material in Damascus.

16. In response to the aforementioned letters, an FFM team was dispatched from 12 to 18 December 2016 to Damascus, where it was able to conduct 16 interviews and receive samples and other material, including biomedical samples.

17. On 17 November 2016, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2319 (2016) deciding to renew the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), as set out in resolution 2235 (2015), for a further period of one year. On 22 November 2016, the resolution was transmitted by the United Nations to the Director-General, who reported on the extension of the

mandate of the JIM in his opening statement to the Conference of the States Parties at its Twenty-First Session (C-21/DG.17, dated 28 November 2016).

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-83/DEC.5

18. On 1 December 2016, the Director-General sent a letter to H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, to inform him of the commencement of the preparatory work in view of the implementation of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5.

Conclusion

19. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4 and on the activities of the FFM, as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar, confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.